United Nations A/57/171

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 July 2002

Original: English

Fifty-seventh session
Item 104 of the preliminary list*
Advancement of women

Elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/68 of 4 December 2000, the present report provides information on the legal, policy and programmatic measures introduced by Member States and activities within the United Nations system to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The report identifies areas in which further efforts are needed.

* A/57/50/Rev.1.

02-46664 (E) 190802

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Measures taken by Member States	3
	A. Legal measures	3
	B. Policy measures	4
	C. Support, capacity-building and research	5
III.	Measures taken within the United Nations system	7
	A. Twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly	7
	B. Twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly	7
	C. World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance	7
	D. Commission on the Status of Women	7
	E. Commission on Human Rights	8
	F. Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences	9
	G. Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	9
	H. Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights	9
	I. Human rights treaty bodies	10
IV.	Other activities of the organizations of the United Nations system	11
	A. United Nations, including the regional commissions	11
	B. Specialized agencies and other entities	12
V.	Conclusions and recommendations	12

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/68 of 4 December 2000, on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session a comprehensive report on the matters raised therein. The present report, submitted in response to that request, is based, inter alia, on information contained in the replies received from Member States and organizations of the United Nations system in response to a request of the Secretary-General for information. The report is complemented by the reports of the Secretary-General on working towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour (A/57/169) and on trafficking in women and girls (A/51/170), submitted in accordance with, respectively, General Assembly resolutions 55/66 and 55/67 of 4 December 2000.

II. Measures taken by Member States

2. As at 5 June 2002, 25 Member States[1] had responded to the Secretary-General's request for information on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/68. Responses indicated that activities undertaken since the adoption of the resolution included legislation, policy-making, and activities to build capacity and provide support.

A. Legal measures

3. The United Republic of Tanzania has signed the addendum to the 1997 Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development, concerning the prevention and eradication of violence against women and children, which elaborates legal, socio-economic, cultural, educational, political and budgetary measures to eradicate such violence. Mexico and Uruguay have ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women ("Convention of Belém do Pará"). Article 53 of the Constitution of Thailand establishes the right of family members to State protection from violence and unjust treatment.

4. Criminal provisions in several Member States addressed various forms of violence against women. Australia has introduced the Criminal Code Amendment (Slavery and Sexual Servitude) Act 1999, which criminalizes sexual servitude and penalizes those whose conduct causes another to enter into, or continue to exist in, a state of sexual servitude, as well as those who engage in businesses involving the sexual servitude of others or in deceptive conduct to induce another person into such servitude. Provisions in the Penal Code or in specific laws in Egypt have rendered all acts referred to in the resolution as criminal offences. Egypt has removed a loophole wherein a perpetrator would be pardoned if he married his victim in cases of abduction, and has banned female circumcision except for reasons of medical necessity. Kazakhstan has strengthened penalties for rape, and removed the requirement for accusation or statement by the victim as a requirement for prosecution. In Luxembourg, a draft law (No. 4801) on domestic violence was presented in May 2001. Ukraine has adopted an act on the prevention of domestic violence that covered physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. Uruguay's draft law on domestic violence is currently under consideration in its legislature. Malaysia's Domestic Violence Act of 1994 criminalized domestic violence, imposed penalties and provided for interim protection orders and penalties for their breach. Mauritius enacted the Protection from Domestic Violence Act in 1997, while a draft sex discrimination bill has been prepared and released for public comment. Mexico has increased the penalty for sexual violence, rape, child pornography and corruption of, or violence against, minors or disabled persons and has adopted new provisions on domestic violence that made rape between married and unmarried spouses or partners punishable. The Netherlands has introduced harsher penalties for assault, and extended the scope of article 304, paragraph 1, of its Criminal Code to include "partner" as well as "spouse". By virtue of its Law No. 7/2000, the crime of ill-treatment has become a public offence in Portugal. An offender can be forbidden any contact with the victim and removed from the victim's home for a period of two years. Portugal's Law No. 93/99 also provides witness protection for those who testified against a family member. Other laws in Portugal have established the framework for a public network of

shelters for women victims of violence, and payment in advance of an indemnity to victims of violence. Singapore has criminalized rape, incest and molestation of a woman and has authorized courts to issue personal protection orders in domestic violence cases with penalties for their breach. Thailand has amended its criminal procedures with regard to children who are victims or witnesses, while Turkey has presented a draft bill to Parliament which will amend its Family Protection Law No. 4320 on measures to be taken in domestic violence cases. In 1998, the United Republic of Tanzania enacted the Sexual Offences (Special Provisions) Act to define rape, sexual assault, grave sexual abuse, threats and intimidation, sexual harassment and use of criminal force, female genital mutilation, procuring for prostitution, trafficking in women, defilement and cruelty to children as offences.

5. In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, changes have been proposed to strengthen protection in child contact cases and amendments are under consideration to widen the definition of harm in the Children Act to include any harm a child may suffer, or was at risk of suffering, as a result of witnessing the ill-treatment of another person.

6. No specific provisions on violence against women exist in Denmark, Greece, Malta, Monaco and Uruguay, where general provisions in the penal codes are applied. Criminal provisions dealing with the exploitation of women and girls, and providing for imprisonment and fines for facilitation of promiscuity, pimping, exploitation of prostitutes and body trafficking exist in Greece, and the introduction of specific legislation on violence against women was reportedly a priority. In determining the seriousness of an offence in Denmark, information regarding the victim is taken into account. In Malta, violence in the domestic sphere is considered to be aggravated crime and conviction attracted enhanced penalties.

7. Australia's Racial Discrimination Act 1975 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent and national or ethnic origin. Indigenous women and women from diverse cultural backgrounds can lodge complaints of discrimination with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Race Discrimination Commissioner.

8. Doctors who are involved in female genital mutilation will be prosecuted under the Medical Malpractice (Disciplinary Sanctions) Act in the Netherlands and, although female genital mutilation is not specifically identified as an offence in the Criminal Code, it is regarded as an assault.

B. Policy measures

9. An action plan on violence against women was launched by Denmark on 8 March 2002, a national plan against domestic violence has been adopted in Portugal (Resolution No. 55/99 of the Council of Ministers), a national plan of action for 2001-2005 adopted in Ukraine (Decree dated 6 May 2001 by the Cabinet of Ministers) with a view to implementing the outcome document, and Mexico has created the National Programme to Combat Domestic Violence 1999-2000 (PRONAVI), the National Programme for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination against Women 2001-2006 (PROEQUIDAD) and the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES) to promote a culture of non-violence and non-discrimination against women. In Malawi, a national strategy to combat gender-based violence, based on the addendum to the SADC Gender and Development Declaration, has been developed; in Brazil, the National Programme to Combat and Prevent Domestic and Sexual Violence against Women, the Community Pact against Violence within the Family, a training programme for police instructors and specialists, and a project to train the military police on fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law are being implemented; and in Spain, the second comprehensive Plan of Action against Domestic Violence (2001-2004) has been approved by the Council of Ministers.

10. Under the auspices of Thailand's National Committee on Family and Combating Against Violence, the National Policy and Plan on the Elimination of Violence against Children and Women was formulated and approved by the Council of Ministers on 29 June 1999. A national development plan for counselling programmes has also been formulated, is currently being scrutinized and will be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval.

11. In the United Kingdom, a ministerial group has been established to provide coordinated and concerted action at the highest level on violence against women. Existing law will be reinforced through clear working guidelines. A policy statement, explaining how the

Crown Prosecution deals with cases of domestic violence, has been developed.

12. The United Republic of Tanzania has formulated the Tanzania Development Vision to 2025, which addresses the socio-economic conditions that perpetuate acts of violence against women. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Human Resources has formulated the Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. The adoption of the Code by private enterprises will be encouraged.

13. Egypt's strategy for the advancement of women devotes particular attention to the various economic, education, health, social and cultural problems women experience, focuses on weak and marginalized social groups and addresses the root causes of violence against women through positive efforts to promote the role of women in society and advance the position of women at all levels.

14. Mauritius has prepared an action plan that will be implemented by a working group of non-governmental organizations constituted by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare.

15. The Netherlands reports that women from outside the European Union and the European Economic Area are not given permits to work as prostitutes, and municipal authorities, who are primarily responsible for developing and implementing local policy on prostitution, can withdraw the licences of, or close down, brothels that employ prostitutes who are living in the country illegally. Attention is devoted to health care and assistance, particularly with a view to preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Policy specifically targets minors forced into prostitution. Tourists from the Netherlands who have sex with children under 16 years of age are held criminally liable, provided the act is an offence in the country concerned. In the Netherlands, policy with regard to female genital mutilation is to emphasize prevention and education.

C. Support, capacity-building and research

16. Australia has provided funding for national educational activities to prevent the practice of female genital mutilation and to assist women and girls affected by the practice. The Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has prepared a booklet, *Female Genital Mutilation: Information for Australian Health Professionals*.

17. Brazil has established 307 special police stations for women that provide specialized care to women victims of domestic and sexual violence, initiate investigations and help in bringing cases of domestic violence to court. Brazil's Health Ministry has also developed a procedure for the treatment of women and adolescent victims of violence.

18. In Belarus, work has been under way to establish crisis centres for women and a calendar and booklets that contain practical advice for potential victims of domestic violence have been issued. In Greece, an SOS telephone line has been established, pamphlets directed at both victims and professionals, such as the police and social workers, have been published and educational and training seminars have been organized. In Kazakhstan, 18 crisis centres for women and children are in operation, and there are plans to offer occupational therapy and job rehabilitation to women victims of violence. In Malawi a book on women and law was published and distributed to most governmental departments and a large number of non-governmental organizations. A campaign to sensitize communities about gender-based violence was launched in 2000 and repeated in 2001, and victim support units have been established at all police stations. In July 2001, Malaysia launched the "Women Against Violence" campaign; "one-stop" crisis centres have been set up at hospitals, where victims of violence can be treated by medical personnel, questioned by police and counselled for post-trauma syndrome by trained personnel. A standardized rape investigation kit has also been designed for doctors. The Philippines has established women's and children's desks at police stations, conducted gender-sensitive training for governmental officials handling domestic violence cases, created a basic self-defence programme for Filipino women working overseas, established a network of lawyers working on violence against women, and conducted information campaigns and developed a manual on sexual harassment cases in government. Ukraine has organized training sessions on the prevention of domestic violence and violence in the workplace. In 2001, Uruguay's National Institute for Family and Women's Affairs carried out awareness-raising activities on domestic violence, including the

convening of workshops, training for teachers in secondary schools and dissemination of publications.

19. A decentralized family counselling service has been established in five regions of Mauritius and a domestic violence intervention unit, with five subunits equipped with transport facilities and a hotline service, working in close collaboration with the Police Department, the Ministry of Health and other institutions, has also been established; the creation of a family court is under consideration. A sensitization campaign has been conducted in order to make youth aware of the dangers of unsafe sex and of commercial sexual exploitation.

20. Mexico has created a support network for women victims of abuse, a domestic violence care centre and a treatment centre for victims of sexual crimes, and has formulated a number of initiatives, including a campaign against child abuse in Central America and Mexico, and a women's hotline programme.

21. Singapore has developed a comprehensive range of programmes and services to deal with domestic violence, including a networking system, a mandatory counselling programme aimed at rehabilitating the perpetrator and providing support to victims and their children, a programme for male perpetrators, an inter-agency dialogue group to review policy and coordinate public education efforts, a programme to promote alternatives to violence, counselling for victims and child witnesses of violence, crisis shelters and financial and casework assistance to women victims in violent relationships. Turkey has established eight guesthouses that provided counselling and financial assistance and has developed a hotline project in 21 provinces. Portugal has provided 31 shelters and a 24-hour emergency telephone number for victims of domestic violence. A project for the police (Projecto INOVAR) has been developed to raise awareness about and advise on how to deal with violence against women.

22. In Thailand, November has been designated as the month of campaigning to stop violence against children and women. A seminar for police has been held, as has a national meeting on measures to combat violence against children and women. Twenty crisis centres have been set up at provincial hospitals, and a successful pilot "one-stop" centre that is run by medical personnel, social workers and coordinated with police and other related officials is in operation.

23. Public campaigns have been launched in the Netherlands to promote prevention of violence and improve protection of vulnerable groups. A national domestic violence network within the police organization with a focus on increasing expertise, improving registration, compiling files and exchanging knowledge was established at the end of 2001, and domestic violence is now included in the syllabus of basic police training. In addition, networks of counsellors have been created, as has an information centre dealing with sexual harassment in educational institutions. An advertising campaign to convey the message that sexual harassment at work is unacceptable has also been funded, and a video documentary on female genital mutilation is being subsidized. The diplomatic missions of the Netherlands supported projects of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations covering, inter alia: training and sensitization of law-enforcement officers; prevention of harmful, traditional practices; provision of advocacy services and support to victims of violence; and elimination of trafficking, slavery and forced sexual abuse of women and children.

24. Support and professional assistance to women who were victims of domestic violence are provided in Malta, as are rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence.

25. Spain's Institute for Women's Issues published the text of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in both Spanish and English, as well as a special information bulletin on its significance and scope.

26. Several Governments reported that they had collaborated with non-governmental organizations. For example, non-governmental organizations had participated in the preparation of Denmark's action plan. Brazil, with the support of non-governmental organizations, had conducted campaigns to promote women's empowerment. Malaysia had collaborated closely with non-governmental organizations, as had the United Republic of Tanzania, which had also involved religious organizations and civil society in raising awareness and carrying out gender sensitization. Spain had encouraged and supported collaboration between Spanish non-governmental organizations and those in the country of origin of women victims in the implementation of assistance and rehabilitation programmes. Some non-governmental

organizations had set up counselling units for women and children in the United Republic of Tanzania, while in Mauritius painting and drawing competitions and other activities had been organized with the full participation of non-governmental organizations and community-based associations in areas in which children were considered to be vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.

27. Belarus, Greece, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom report the preparation of surveys and research studies.

III. Measures taken within the United Nations system

28. The General Assembly, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, human rights mechanisms and other entities have devoted attention to violence against women.

A. Twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly

29. The General Assembly, by resolution S-26/2 of 27 June 2001, called upon Governments to ensure by 2005 the development and accelerated implementation of national strategies for women's empowerment, the promotion and protection of women's full enjoyment of all human rights and reduction of their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS through the elimination of all forms of discrimination, as well as all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional and customary practices, abuse, rape and other forms of sexual violence, battering and trafficking in women and girls.

B. Twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly

30. At its twenty-seventh special session, the General Assembly recognized that the achievement of goals for children, particularly for girls, would be advanced if women fully enjoyed all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, were empowered to participate fully and equally in all spheres of society and were protected and free from all forms of violence, abuse and discrimination (resolution S-27/2, annex, para. 23).

C. World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

31. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in September 2001 (see A/CONF.189/12, chap. I) noted that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance revealed themselves in a differentiated manner for women and girls, and could be among the factors leading to a deterioration in their living conditions, poverty, violence, multiple forms of discrimination, and the limitation or denial of their human rights. States were urged to take all necessary measures to address specifically, through policies and programmes, racism and racially motivated violence against women and girls and to increase cooperation, policy responses and effective implementation of national legislation and of their obligations under relevant international instruments, and other protective and preventive measures aimed at the elimination of all forms of racially motivated discrimination and violence against women and girls. Violence against particular groups of women was specifically addressed, with States being called on to deal with violence against indigenous women and girls, including domestic violence, and to consider adopting and implementing immigration policies and programmes that would enable immigrants, in particular women and children who were victims of spousal or domestic violence, to free themselves from abusive relationships. States were also urged to take effective steps to protect refugees and internally displaced women and girls from violence, to investigate any such violations and to bring those responsible to justice, in collaboration, when appropriate, with the relevant and competent organizations.

D. Commission on the Status of Women

32. At its forty-fifth session held in 2001, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS,[2]

in which it, inter alia, recommended the strengthening of concrete measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. In its agreed conclusions on gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,[3] the Commission stated that violence against women and girls was a major obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of gender equality, development and peace and that violence against women both violated and impaired or nullified the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It considered that gender-based violence, such as battering and other forms of domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual slavery and exploitation, international trafficking in women and children, forced prostitution and sexual harassment, as well as violence against women resulting from cultural prejudice, racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia, pornography, ethnic cleansing, armed conflict, foreign occupation, religious and anti-religious extremism and terrorism, were incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated. It recommended that policies and measures be designed and implemented that address all forms of violence against women and girls, and empower victims of all forms of violence, in particular women and girls, to regain control over their lives, inter alia, through special protection and assistance measures. With regard to women refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons who are often subjected to sexual and other violence, it agreed that steps should be taken to eliminate any violations of their human rights. The issue of women's human rights and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform for Action[3] and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (see resolutions S-23/2 and S-23/3) will be taken up by the Commission on the Status of Women as a thematic issue at its forty-seventh session, to be held in March 2003.

E. Commission on Human Rights

33. At its fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolutions[4] which focused on violence against women in general (resolutions 2001/49 and 2002/52, on the elimination of violence against women), addressed specific forms of violence against women (resolutions 2001/48 and 2002/51, on traffic in women and girls) and resolutions that identified specific categories of women victims of violence (resolution 2001/52, on the human rights of migrants; resolution 2002/58, on violence against women migrant workers; resolution 2002/59, on the protection of migrants and their families; and resolution 2002/62, on the human rights of migrants). At both sessions, the Commission adopted a number of country-specific resolutions that made reference to various forms of violence against women. In several thematic resolutions, it also made a reference to violence against women (resolutions 2001/34 and 2002/49, on women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing). In other resolutions (including 2001/47 and 2002/48, on the right to freedom of opinion and expression), the Commission urged Governments to implement effective measures to eliminate the atmosphere of fear which often prevents women who have been victims of violence, either in domestic or community settings or as a result of armed conflict, from communicating freely on their own behalf or through intermediaries.

34. In resolution 2001/62, the Commission on Human Rights invited the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture to continue to consider questions concerning torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment directed against women, and to exchange views with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women with a view to enhancing further their mutual cooperation. In resolution 2002/52, it invited the Special Rapporteur on violence against women to continue to cooperate with other special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of the working groups and special procedures of the Commission, including, where appropriate, undertaking joint missions, joint reports, urgent appeals and communications.

35. By resolution 2002/52, on the elimination of violence against women, the Commission on Human Rights noted, inter alia, that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance reveal themselves in a differentiated manner for women and girls, and could be among the factors leading to a deterioration in their living conditions, poverty, violence, multiple forms of discrimination and the limitation or denial of their human rights. The Commission stressed that violence against women in the family occurs within the context of de jure and de facto discrimination against women and the lower

status accorded to women in society and was exacerbated by the obstacles women often face in seeking remedies from the State. The Commission stressed the impact on women's physical and mental health, including their reproductive and sexual health and encouraged States to ensure that women have access to comprehensive and accessible health services and programmes and to health-care providers who are knowledgeable and trained to meet the needs of patients who have been subjected to violence, in order to minimize the adverse physical and psychological consequences of violence. The Commission emphasized that violence against women and girls, including rape, female genital mutilation, incest, early and forced marriage, violence related to commercial sexual exploitation as well as economic exploitation and other forms of sexual violence can increase their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and aggravate the conditions fostering the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Commission urged Member States and the United Nations system to give attention to, and encouraged greater international cooperation in, the systematic research, collection, analysis and dissemination of data, including information disaggregated by sex and age, on the extent, nature and consequences of violence against women and girls, and on the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes for combating this violence.

F. Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

36. The report submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (E/CN.4/2001/73 and Add.1-2) addressed violence against women perpetrated and/or condoned by the State in times of armed conflict during the period from 1997 to 2000. The report submitted to the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2002/83 and Add.1-3) focused on cultural practices in the family that are violent towards women.

G. Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

37. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session (E/CN.4/2001/78 and Add.1-2) focused on the role of the private sector in relation to the mandate and highlighted some of the ways in which the private sector was assuming a proactive and reactive role in responding to violations, including private telephone companies assisting with the establishment of telephone hotlines for children in crisis and training of hotel staff to combat child prostitution. The Special Rapporteur has developed an information sheet to facilitate the submission of reliable information (E/CN.4/2002/88, annex).

H. Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

38. The Special Rapporteur on traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl child submitted her fifth report to the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights at its fifty-third session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/27). In that report, she reviewed the most recent information on the national and international measures taken to combat female genital mutilation and provided information on other traditional practices. The Subcommission, by its resolution 2001/13, requested her to submit an updated report to it at its session in 2002.

39. At its twenty-sixth session in 2001, the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery gave priority consideration to the issues of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children, illegal migration, smuggling and prostitution. In 2002, its priority issue will be the exploitation of children, in particular in the context of prostitution and domestic servitude and, in 2003, its annual issue, welcomed by the Subcommission in its resolution 2001/14, will be contemporary forms of slavery related to, and generated by, discrimination, in particular gender discrimination, focusing attention on abuses against women and girls, such as forced marriages, early marriages and sale of wives.

I. Human rights treaty bodies

40. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/68, each of the six bodies established under United Nations human rights treaties have addressed various aspects of violence against women in their constructive dialogue with States parties, concluding observations and comments and their other work.

41. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has requested information on efforts to address the ethnic dimensions of migration and trafficking in persons,[5] socio-economic data disaggregated by gender and national and ethnic group and information on measures taken to prevent gender-related racial discrimination, including sexual exploitation and violence,[6] and emphasized State party responsibility to undertake all measures to bring the practice of abduction of women and children to an end and to ensure that legal action was taken against those responsible for such acts, and compensation given to those aggrieved.[7]

42. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has requested updated statistics on the situation of women, in particular on the phenomenon of domestic violence, as well as on the status of implementation of newly adopted legislation on the matter (E/C.12/1/Add.56, para. 26).

43. The Human Rights Committee has recommended that legal adjustments be made to ensure that women enjoyed the protection required under article 7 of the Covenant with regard to a well-founded fear of genital mutilation or other traditional practices that infringed upon their physical integrity or health.[8] It has also recommended that more vigorous measures be taken to encourage the development of a culture of human rights and to ban violence against women and called for measures to encourage women to report domestic violence to the authorities, to make police officers more sensitive in their handling of allegations of rape and its psychological effects on the victim, and to provide shelters and other support for victims of domestic violence (CCPR/CO/74/HUN, para. 10).

44. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended that studies be undertaken on domestic violence, ill-treatment and abuse, including sexual abuse, and that cases of domestic violence and ill-treatment and abuse of children, including sexual abuse within the family, be properly investigated within a child-sensitive inquiry and judicial procedure, and has recommended the elimination of virginity tests. It has also recommended that measures be taken to provide support services to children in legal proceedings, and for the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of the victims of rape, abuse, neglect, ill-treatment and violence (CRC/C/15/Add.152, para. 46).

45. The Committee against Torture has recommended that effective measures be taken to prosecute and punish violence against women as well as trafficking in women, including adopting appropriate legislation, conducting research and raising awareness of the problem and including the issue in the training of law-enforcement officials and other relevant professional groups.[9]

46. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has requested that the issue of violence against women be assigned high priority and that such violence, including domestic violence, be recognized as a violation of human rights of women under the Convention, recommended gender training for all public officials, in particular law-enforcement officials and the judiciary, as well as health workers, to educate them about all forms of violence against women and girls, and recommended that awareness-raising campaigns through the media and public education programmes be organized.[10] The Committee has also recommended that an action plan be developed, including a public-awareness campaign targeted at both women and men, with the support of civil society and social partners, to eliminate the gap between statutory law and social customs and practices, especially with regard to family law.[11]

47. In its contributions to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the World Summit on Sustainable Development and in its statement on ending discrimination against older women through the Convention, forwarded to the preparatory committee for the World Assembly on Ageing, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has made reference to several aspects of violence against women.[12] In particular, in its contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it has recommended that controls, laws and policies be adopted and implemented to prevent the negative and harmful impact of tourism which, although an important growth sector, often led to the sexual

exploitation of, trafficking in and violence against women and children.

IV. Other activities of the organizations of the United Nations system

A. United Nations, including the regional commissions

48. Measures to address violence against women were introduced in several peacekeeping missions. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has created systems to ensure that victims of sexual assault are provided with appropriate information on options and referred to advocacy and support services, and has developed a protocol for police procedures regarding sexual assault cases. UNMIK police introduced a domestic violence policy in September 2000 in order to provide guidance for all officers responding to domestic violence incidents, and UNMIK police domestic violence coordinators were present in all regional police headquarters. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) continued to monitor cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse reported to local police, and has been developing a database for cases involving violence against women and children, by which the frequency of calls, types of crimes, arrests and other data would be easily discerned. Assistance had also been provided to the local police in developing standardized interview forms for victims, perpetrators and witnesses of domestic violence, while a domestic violence media campaign was also launched throughout the country in mid-2001 to raise awareness about the issue. UNMIBH human rights officers have conducted on a regular basis training on domestic violence for local police officers, while the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights conducts monthly human rights training, including training on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women and children, for approximately 40 international police task force officers. The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Human Rights Office at Abkhazia, Georgia, have paid special attention to gender issues and, in 2001, facilitated the translation and publication in the Abkhaz language of the Human Rights Facts Sheet No. 22, on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

49. In February 2002, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness on how to prevent domestic violence and to inform victims of where they could seek help. The Gender Affairs Unit (now known as the Office of the Adviser for the Promotion of Equality) assisted in a training workshop for East Timorese journalists on gender-sensitive reporting of crimes of violence against women, and plans to support a number of activities, including a study on the nature of gender-based violence in East Timor, drafting of legislation, police and judicial training, and awareness-raising to encourage non-violence, in particular in the home. The gender office of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) conducts orientation programmes for civilian staff which include a gender component.

50. The Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention has been engaged in a three-year project in South Africa to address violence against women by establishing two pilot outreach centres that provide a range of services, including legal advice, counselling, medical attention and support, to victims and counselling to perpetrators and potential perpetrators in Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape provinces, in line with the national crime prevention strategy.

51. The Economic Commission for Africa has continued to contribute to sensitizing African Governments and non-governmental organizations to the need to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document, through national and subregional forums organized by the African Centre for Gender and Development and the provision of technical assistance and advisory services at the national level. The activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean include support for the development of data collection, technical assistance for legislative reform, and training activities for police and other groups in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

B. Specialized agencies and other entities

52. The activities of the World Health Organization include the implementation of a study in eight countries of the prevalence, risk and protective factors, health consequences and strategies used by women to respond to domestic violence; the elaboration of guidelines on the subject "Putting women's safety first: ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women"; the development and testing of a manual for conducting research on violence against women; research in Indonesia, Nigeria and the Philippines on the perceptions and experience of adolescents with regard to sexual coercion; the training of trainers on programmes to make primary health-care providers and specialists in the rehabilitation of psychiatric patients sensitive to the needs of women victims of violence; the provision of support to a survey in China of domestic violence against pregnant and postpartum women and its impact on women and children; the development of an intervention programme for battered women, including a six-month training programme for peer community workers and professionals; the establishment of a coordinated network in nine Latin American countries to provide comprehensive support to women and their children affected by intimate partner violence; collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on evaluation of health sector interventions for women experiencing violence; and the development of policy guidance and clinical management guidelines for sexual abuse, aimed at strengthening the response of the health sector in this context. Within the framework of its work to reduce women's vulnerabilities and risks, the activities of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS have included the organization of a regional workshop to analyse the situation of sex work in western and central Africa, and support for research on clandestine sex work in Burkina Faso.

53. Recently completed activities supported by the Trust Fund in Support of Action to Eliminate Violence Against Women of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) include: a project in the United Republic of Tanzania that encouraged the participation of law-enforcement officers in the design of training manuals on gender issues in justice provision; a study conducted in Mongolia which provided first-time data on district court decisions on domestic violence; a public campaign to combat violence against women in China, which encouraged the Government to establish the National Coordinating Group for the Protection of Rights of Women and Children; and a project in Brazil aimed at strengthening municipal-level initiatives to end violence against women.

54. In partnership with the Media/Materials Clearinghouse at Johns Hopkins University, UNIFEM has developed a catalogue-cum-database of media and communications resources on violence against women. The catalogue provides organizations with direct access to a wide range of communications materials and allows them to download and adapt these tools to their culture and country-specific context. In 2001, in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations Population Fund, UNIFEM has supported the development and launching of a national action plan to eliminate violence against women. It also launched a regional advocacy campaign to end violence against women in eight countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Lithuania.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

55. Since the convening of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, specific legal measures, in particular with regard to domestic violence, have been put in place or contemplated by Member States. In some countries in which no specific regulations relating to women existed, the introduction of special provisions has been assigned priority or is in the drafting stage. In some cases, comprehensive legislation to address various forms of violence against women and children has been enacted or is contemplated. Various initiatives, strategies and action plans have been launched, aimed at, among other things, eradication, prevention, promotion, information, legislation, protection and welfare, education and research, enhancement of the economic capacity of women, and monitoring. Efforts are being made to provide psychological, legal, health care and other support to victims of violence, to educate relevant professionals, such as the police, social workers and medical personnel, and to rehabilitate offenders. Several replies acknowledged the work being done by non-governmental organizations, including activities carried out in collaboration with

Governments and on awareness-raising, gender sensitization and counselling.

56. The evaluation of existing legislation from a gender-sensitive perspective, as well as the impact of such legislation, the focused collection of data disaggregated by sex and age on all forms of violence against women and girls, the assessment of policies and programmes, research activities, and the establishment or strengthening of monitoring and implementation mechanisms continue to require priority attention and dedicated action. Measurable action plans for the short, medium and long term are crucial. Information and coordinated analysis of all aspects of the issue, including the positive developments and remaining obstacles, are needed. Furthermore, given the growing number of actors working to eliminate all forms of violence against women within and outside the United Nations system at all levels, ways to facilitate a useful exchange of emerging results, recommendations and experiences in the field are required.

Notes

[1] Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, Greece, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2001/27 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. A.IV.

[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[4] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 3* (E/2001/27), chap. II, sect. A; and ibid., *2002, Supplement No. 3* (E/2002/3), chap. II, sect. A.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 18* and corrigendum (A/56/18 and Corr.1), para. 75.

[6] Ibid., para. 180.

[7] Ibid., para 212.

[8] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 40* (A/56/40), vol. I, para. 82 (11).

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 44* (A/56/44), para. 82 (j).

[10] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/56/38), part one, para. 96.

[11] Ibid., part two, para. 123.

[12] See, respectively, ibid., part one, paras. 373-385, E/CN.6/2002/CP.1, annex II, and E/CN.6/2002/CP.1, annex III.